

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER/HLK
APPROVED BY P - MR. HABIB
NEA - MR. ATHERTON
S/S-0:TMARTIN

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O P 150151Z SEP 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MILI, PBOR, US, IS, LE

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED THE ANALYSES AND COMMENTS PROVIDED BY TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS AND BEIRUT FOLLOWING THE LATEST EXCHANGE WITH THE ISRAELIS ON THEIR POSITION TOWARDS SOUTH LEBANON.

2. FOR CHARGE LANE: PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH BOUTROS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE THE PRESENT ISRAELI POSITION. IN DOING SO, YOU MUST MAKE IT TOTALLY CLEAR THAT WE DO NOT REGARD THIS AS THE FINAL WORD ON THE SUBJECT

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BUT THAT WE NEED REACTIONS OF BOUTROS AND SARKIS BEFORE WE DECIDE ON FURTHER STEPS. YOU SHOULD TELL BOUTROS WE ARE CONVEYING ISRAELI RESPONSE ONLY TO HIM FOR HIS AND SARKIS' INFORMATION. PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--THE ISRAELIS HAVE INFORMED US THAT THEY WILL NOT FIRE ON, ATTACK, OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY PALESTINIAN FORCES

WHICH ARE CLEARLY WITHDRAWING FROM THE AREA. THIS COMMITMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO PALESTINIAN FORCES WHICH ARE LEFT PERMANENTLY IN PLACE SOUTH AND EAST OF THE LITANI.

--ONLY ON CONDITION THAT ALL PLO FORCES AGREE TO WITHDRAW

TO THE NORTH AND WEST OF THE LITANI WILL THE ISRAELIS COOPERATE FULLY, TO THE EXTENT OF INFLUENCING THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO OBSERVE THE CEASEFIRE AND NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WITHDRAWAL.

--IN CONVEYING THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE ISRAELI POSITION, AND SEEKING A LEBANESE RESPONSE WHICH WE CAN THEN USE IN OUR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS, WE DO NOT WISH TO IMPLY THAT WE ARE SUPPORTING THE ISRAELIS' VIEW-POINT BUT HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO CONVEY ISRAELI VIEWS ACCURATELY TO GOL JUST AS WE CONVEY LEBANESE VIEWS TO ISRAELIS. LIKE THE ISRAELIS, WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE PALESTINIAN ARMED ELEMENTS MORE DISTANT FROM THE BORDER WITH ISRAEL, SINCE THIS WOULD REDUCE THE DANGER OF ARMED CONFLICT IN THE AREA. AT THE SAME TIME WE RECOGNIZE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROCEED IN A WAY WHICH WILL NOT UNDERMINE WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR.

3. IF BOUTROS TAKES POSITION THAT NEW NEGOTIATIONS ARE IMPOSSIBLE AND HOLD GRAVE RISKS, AS WE SUSPECT HE WILL,
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YOU SHOULD THEN PRESS HIM FOR A COMMITMENT THAT HE AND SARKIS--AFTER THIS STAGE OF THE SHTOURA AGREEMENT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED--WILL TRY TO NEGOTIATE A FURTHER AND MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AT AN EARLY MOMENT. SAY THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE ISRAELIS WITH A FIRM COMMITMENT OF THIS KIND.

4. SINCE IT WILL BE SO CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF ACHIEVING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THESE EFFORTS THAT NO WORD OF ISRAEL'S PRESENT POSITION LEAK OUT AT THIS TIME, YOU AND BOUTROS SHOULD AGREE BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE MEETING ON THE STORY BOUTROS WILL GIVE TO THE PRESS, KEEPING IT AS GENERAL AND NON-SUBSTANTIVE AS POSSIBLE AND URGING HIM TO STICK TO IT. VANCE

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